

## Sermons and Sermons :: Are we wholly sanctified when we are justified, our hearts cleansed from all sin? ~John Wesley

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From what has been said we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion, -- that we are wholly sanctified when we are justified; that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered, as was observed before, from the dominion of outward sin; and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow, or be led by it: but it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to backsliding, are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary is not, as some may think, an innocent harmless mistake. No: it does immense harm: it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change; for it is manifest, "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." If, therefore, we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any further healing. On this supposition it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole; that our hearts are not fully purified; that there is yet in us a "carnal mind," which is still in its nature "enmity against God;" that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed; shows, beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change. We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are born again: In that instant we experience that inward change from "darkness into marvellous light;" from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God; from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But are we then entirely changed? Are we wholly transformed into the image of him that created us? Far from it: we still retain a depth of sin; and it is the consciousness of this which constrains us to groan, for a full deliverance, to him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly, and, as it were, notionally convinced, have little concern about entire sanctification. They may possibly hold the opinion, that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneasiness for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shows them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then, and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

*Break off the yoke of inbred sin,  
And fully set my spirit free!  
I cannot rest till pure within,  
Till I am wholly lost in Thee.*

We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our demerit, after we are accepted (which in one sense may be termed guilt,) is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified as ever we did before. Without this conviction, we cannot but account the blood of the covenant as a common thing, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which, of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that

*He ever lives above,  
For us to intercede, --  
His all-atoning love,  
His precious blood, to plead.*

It is this repentance, and the faith intimately connected with it, which are expressed in those strong lines, --

*I sin in every breath I draw,  
Nor do Thy will, nor keep Thy law  
On earth, as angels do above:*

*But still the fountain open stands,  
Washes my feet, my heart, my hands,*

*Till I am perfected in love.*

We may observe, Thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter helplessness, of our total inability to retain anything we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to "magnify him," indeed; to "give Him all the glory of his grace;" to "make him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour; and truly to set the crown upon his head." These excellent words, as they have frequently been used, have little or no meaning; but they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus, as it were, go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in him; when we sink into nothing, that he may be all in all. Then, his almighty grace having abolished "every high thing which exalted itself against him," every temper, and thought, and word, and work "is brought to the obedience of Christ."

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